



Patients as Advisors: Enhancing Medical Education Curricula

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Acknowledgments

About eight years ago we had an idea for medical education. Why not involve patients and families in medical education? Why not ask them what they thought medical students and residents need to learn about being physicians? Why not engage them in developing new activities and co-teaching with us at the medical school? As it turned out, while this idea seemed fairly simple in a dialog at the back of an auditorium after Grand Rounds, it required the help, support, and determined efforts of countless people, many of whom we thank here.

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Nearly 200 patient- and family-advisors have participated in this medical education program across the past 7 years. They have become colleagues, experts, teachers, and friends. Each one brought expertise from their experiences with chronic health conditions and a need for intense or repeated healthcare encounters. They have devoted time, insight, ideas, energy, knowledge, and faith that sharing their experiences will help new physicians understand and better meet the needs of patients and families.

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Collaborative endeavors require the time, energy, and commitment of many people. Thank you all!

Overview of this Curriculum Guide:

Medical educators are faced with the challenge of preparing future physicians to enter the profession of medicine. This challenge requires imparting not only an immense compendium of knowledge and technical skills, but also a crucial collection of values, attitudes, intangible behaviors, and ways of relating that fall under the rubric of “professionalism.” Becoming a physician requires caring about patients and interacting with real people in ways that meet real needs, along with technical skills and medical knowledge. How do medical educators convey these less tangible yet important qualities?

One way to meet this challenge is to involve experienced patients and families as partners in education. This guide provides a rationale, describes the practical aspects of developing a group of patients and families as advisors and partners in the effort, and gives examples of activities that have been applied in medical education and found to be fruitful and rewarding complements to the curriculum. In this guide you will find:

- A review of the literature that builds a solid foundation for involving experienced patients and families as partners in medical education.
- Inspiring examples of what it looks like to partner effectively with this group of collaborators.
- The practical aspects of establishing a group of experienced patients and families as advisors and collaborators in medical education.
- A process that connects competencies developed with patients and families to competencies set forth by the Liaison Committee on Medical Education (LCME) and the Accreditation Council on Graduate Medical Education (ACGME).
- A compendium of well-developed activities that illustrate ways to engage experienced patients and families to enhance medical education.

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